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AGAM-P (M) 16 June 69) FOR OT UT 69B017

23 June 1969

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: LTG W. R. Peers, CG, 4th Infantry Division; CG, 1 Field Force Vietnam, Period 1967 - 1968 (U)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Reference: AR 1-26, subject, Senior Officer Debriefing Program (U), dated 4 November 1966.

2. Transmitted herewith is the report of LTG W. R. Peers, subject as above.

3. This report is provided to insure appropriate benefits are realized from the experiences of the author. The report should be reviewed in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 5, AR 1-26; however, it should not be interpreted as the official view of the Department of the Army, or of any agency of the Department of the Army.

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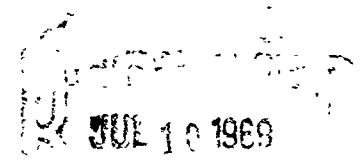
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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7 JUN 1969

AVHGC-DST

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report

Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development
Department of the Army
Washington, D. C. 20310

1. Forwarded herewith are three copies of the Senior Officer Debriefing Report prepared by LTG W. R. Peers who served consecutively as Commanding General 4th Infantry Division and Commanding General I Field Force Vietnam during the period 1967 - 1968.

2. LTG Peers is recommended as a candidate guest speaker at appropriate joint colleges and service schools.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

C. D. WILSON
ILT, AGC
Assistant Adjutant General

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REFLECTIONS OF VIETNAM

EVOLUTION

This report is not intended to be an in-depth study, rather it is a composite of observations within South Vietnam during the period 1964-66, when I served on the DA/JCS Staffs and made several extended visits to South Vietnam; 1967, as Commander, 4th Infantry Division; and 1968, as Commander, I Field Force, Vietnam. During this time I had the opportunity to closely observe the Vietnamese people and their armed forces. One of the outstanding features which I noted initially, and which still obtains to date, is the courage and resiliency of the Vietnamese people. They have been at war in one form or another for almost thirty years. Yet, they have not surrendered, nor bowed down to communist aggression, but have continued in their struggle for independence and freedom. Their armed forces have evolved from a position of impotence in 1964-65 to one of considerable combat capability for this type of conflict.

In the early periods it was not uncommon for ARVN to come out second best in any large engagement with the enemy. In 1965, when General Johnson, then the Army Chief of Staff, visited South Vietnam, the ARVN was at a low ebb and the situation was critical, especially in the Central Highlands, where the communists were attempting to divide the country in two and almost succeeded. Since the introduction of US and Allied forces in 1965, there has been a steady and marked improvement in the fighting ability of ARVN, its units and individual soldiers. This is not to say that there are no problems with respect to ARVN. There are still numerous shortcomings, but the important fact is that such weaknesses are recognized and steps are being taken to correct them. In my view the ARVN forces today are superior, in comparison to the ROK forces at a comparable point of time in the Korean War. Considering the effectiveness of the ROK forces today, this portends a bright future for the ARVN forces.

During the years 1967-68 my activities were solely in II Corps. Hence this report is focused on that area and may not have country-wide application.

MISSION

The tasks of US forces in South Vietnam were multitudinous, stemming from directives, messages and verbal instructions. This is as it should be, but it was always necessary to keep the primary missions in mind. In a broad sense the missions, as I saw them for all US forces and activities, both military and civilian, were:

- a. To defeat and/or eliminate the NVA/VC main forces.
- b. To improve the effectiveness and combat capability of ARVN, to include its combat, combat support, and logistic forces and their operating procedures.

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c. To assist in pacification toward the development of a viable society.

As Commanding General, IFFV, I found that combining the forces and activities into a unified effort was an enormous task. In its simplest form there was headquarters or agency for each of the aforementioned missions -- Headquarters, IFFV, for the direction of US Forces; DSA II Corps to provide assistance and advice to ARVN; and CORDS for the conduct of pacification effort. The above tasks, however, are closely related and cannot be separated into such neat packages. Accordingly, close coordination and cooperation are required to obtain a single, integrated effort. The development of the organization and procedures to provide the necessary interface was time-consuming and difficult. People being people tended to resist changes. The ultimate solution was to task the General and Special staffs of IFFV (with CORDS filling the position of G-5) to develop plans and policies and to monitor all tasks assigned to Headquarters, IFFV and its associated forces and agencies. Despite the resistance to change previously noted, after a time the validity of the modifications became quite apparent to all concerned. They cooperated fully in the development of procedures and methods of operation which ultimately resulted in closely coordinated, cooperative effort.

In early 1968, because of the tactical situation, it was necessary for COMUSMACV to deploy the 1st Cav Div, along with certain aviation, artillery engineer elements and other combat and service support forces from II CTZ to I Corps. Some people viewed this as reducing II Corps/IFFV to an "economy of force" role. However, a careful analysis of the situation was conducted by the IFFV staff which indicated that this need not be so. If all forces could be properly marshalled, and priorities developed, an offensive posture could still be maintained throughout II Corps. In brief, this meant that we would have to get more out of the ARVN and also the ROK's. It also meant that in order to do so, it would be necessary for the US forces to further reduce their combat support in order that such could be made available in greater quantity to the ROK's and the ARVN.

Fortunately in March 1968, General Lu Lan became the II Corps Commander. He was totally in accord with the idea, as was Major General Choe, then Deputy Commander, ROK Field Forces. This was the beginning of the "One War" concept within II Corps. The concept was fostered by monthly meetings of the senior commanders of II Corps, ROK Field Forces, and IFFV to review past events, the status of current operations and future plans. It was further emphasized by periodic meetings of the various staff agencies of the three nations, as well as almost daily contact and communication. The "One War" concept pervaded the thinking and actions of all of the commanders and forces within II CTZ.

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TACTICS

The terrain and the situation within II CTZ are such that, in effect, there are three somewhat different kinds of wars, each requiring variations in tactics.

a. The first is the war in the Highlands. This was conditioned by the Cambodian and Laotian borders and the presence of predominately NVA forces. The border areas provided the enemy forces the sanctuaries from which they could debouch to attack friendly forces and, if necessary, withdraw to the safety of the border sanctuary. The tactics used by the NVA forces were closely akin to those used by the Japanese forces in WW II. This, in turn, resulted in the use of rather formalized tactics by US and ARVN forces. Accordingly, the war in the Highlands could be considered as a somewhat conventional jungle war.

b. At the other end of the spectrum was the war in the four Southern provinces of II Corps (Binh Thuan, Ninh Thuan, Lam Dong and Tuyen Duc). Here the enemy forces were predominately VC main and local forces. This area represents the bulk of MR VI commanded by General Chau. He was a crafty commander and an expert in guerrilla, harassing-type operations. Hence, the war in this area was more of an insurgency type of conflict -- a contest between the guerrilla and counter-guerrilla forces. To my view, this was the most interesting area within II CTZ. While it is true that General Chau is a good commander and had created much uneasiness along QL 20, in Phan Thiet and other cities, I feel that there has been a tendency to give him too much credit. In the period prior to 1968 there were but few US forces in the area. Likewise, the ARVN forces that were there were also few in number and had only limited capability to oppose the VC forces. Given this situation and recognizing the vastness and ruggedness of the terrain, General Chau and the VC could move rapidly from their redoubts and inflict punishing blows on the ARVN forces, the population centers, and the LOC's. However, in mid-1968 additional US forces were moved into the area; ARVN forces were augmented and greatly improved; and a combined headquarters (US Task Force South/Light CP 23 ARVN Division) was created to coordinate the efforts of US and ARVN forces. From that time onward the situations were reversed. The VC were no longer on the offensive. Instead they were primarily defensive and evading Allied operations directed against their mountain and jungle hide-outs.

c. The terrain and the enemy forces in the northeast portion of II Corps were a combination of those found in the aforementioned Highlands and Southern four provinces. Hence the war there took on a rather mixed nature between that previously discussed in the two preceding paragraphs.

In the matter of tactics in a counter-insurgency environment, the one thing that stands out in my mind is that there can be no absolute, hard and fast rules. Contrarily, what is needed is the maximum of flexibility -- flexibility in organization, flexibility in procedures, and flexibility in

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the selection and use of equipment. Perhaps what is even more important is flexibility in thinking -- a capability to adjust to an ever-changing situation, to modify plans and operations even on a field expedient basis, if need be, and to continually strive toward new and better methods. In general terms, the doctrine taught in US Army schools and training centers is valid and serves as a sound tactical foundation for counter-insurgency operations. This is especially so in the Highlands kind of war, but even here it must be interpreted to the immediate situation at hand. It is also valid in the guerrilla type of warfare, but it requires greater adjustment, increased flexibility and more detailed orientation and indoctrination of personnel when they arrive in the combat area.

In the Highlands, when operating near the Cambodian or Laotian border, which incidentally involves some exceedingly rugged and difficult terrain, we made it a rather hard-and-fast rule that maneuvering companies would remain within supporting distance of one another. The controlling factors were one kilometer or one hour, whichever was the quicker. The reason for this should be quite apparent. The NVA had well trained and effective ground reconnaissance elements, which covered a vast network of roads and trails. By the use of carefully selected observation points they could pinpoint Allied formations quite accurately. With this information NVA forces in sanctuaries in Cambodia and Laos had the opportunity to strike a lightning blow at an Allied unit and then to quickly withdraw across the border before additional friendly forces could arrive on the scene. By using the aforementioned rule, one kilometer or one hour, combined with the ever-present artillery and air support, it was possible to break up the enemy's attack before any real damage could be inflicted.

Another matter which was always insisted upon, whether it involved the Highlands or the guerrilla war, was that unit scouts and advance parties be well to the front -- not just a little way, but a long way. This, of course, varied with the terrain. In thick jungle terrain, it could be as little as 100-200 meters; but in comparatively open terrain it should be up to 1000-1500 meters. It is recognized the position of a scout is risky and unenviable. However, he represents the eyes and the ears of the unit to provide warning and protection. Accordingly, such tasks demand highly competent and courageous personnel who must be given special training and should also receive special consideration. From the point of view of the commander, he may have to risk one, two or three men to provide the essential warning and security to the unit. However, this risk is not as great as it may seem. The properly trained and skillful scout rarely becomes a casualty. Yet he can detect the presence of the enemy and give appropriate warning without himself walking into an enemy trap or ambush. Basically, he found the enemy before they found him. The role of a scout is very trying and demanding, and to find an individual who can do this, day after day, is a rarity. Accordingly, such individuals should be rotated frequently and given appropriate periods of rest. What is said here of advance scouts is applicable to a somewhat lesser degree to flank and rear guard security personnel.

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In search and destroy/search and clear type operations, we tended toward small unit operations in preference to larger ones -- small units being fire team, squad, and up to platoon size. Large units are noisy and provide numerous other signs of their presence making it comparatively easy for the enemy to detect and evade. The contrary, of course, is true for the smaller formations. The enemy must move for tactical reasons as well as to transport his equipment, obtain food and the like. Small units can cover a maximum number of trails and infiltration routes and by ambushing can inflict heavy casualties upon the enemy. Obviously the smaller the friendly unit, the more units that can be organized. This, however, must be limited to the number of such units that can be effectively controlled and supported. In small unit operations, the Claymore mine has proven especially effective and represents the firepower of several men. Moreover, it does not have the human frailties such as talking, coughing, etc., to give away its presence.

Our service schools teach and emphasize that patterns should not be created in the conduct of operations. This is highly important and requires continual reemphasis throughout the chain of command. Any time a unit or an individual falls into a habit or set way or time of doing things, the enemy will pick it up and will strike when and where it will hurt the most. Similarly, set patterns tend to negate the effects of friendly operations. For example, most Allied forces habitually employ sizeable artillery and air preps of the LZ for combat assaults. The enemy was well aware of this and could either stand off and later attack the landing force or simply move out of the area. To avoid giving away our intent, we sometimes used small reconnaissance patrols to check out of the LZ and its surrounding area and thereby were able to assault without the use of preparatory fires. Since so many of the assaults had been made using preparatory fires and by helicopters; the enemy, too, fell into the habit of thinking that all infiltrations would be conducted in this manner; hence when combat units were infiltrated by land routes, sometimes up to 20-30 kilometers, it caught the enemy by surprise. This proved an effective, deceptive tactic for ROK, ARVN and US forces.

It is well known that in defensive positions and in manning outposts, it is necessary to have out listening posts, observation points and the like, and to have them far out. This requires no repetition. What is important, however, is to recognize that even though this is well understood by all concerned, getting them to do it is still another matter. Even though their own lives, as well as those of other men in the position, may be at stake, there is always a tendency for some commanders to become lackadaisical and/or overconfident that the enemy will not attack. Almost without exception, every successful attempt by the enemy to breach the wire into the friendly position was accompanied by the lack of listening and observation posts and, in many cases, men in the bunkers were found asleep on the job. What is

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needed is constant and thorough supervision throughout the entire chain of command, from the Corps commander down to the lowest platoon leader. It requires continual checking and rechecking, not just asking if the LP's and OP's are employed, but physically going out at night time to check them on the ground. This point should be constantly stressed in all of the in-country orientations, as well as US Service School and Training Center instruction.

ARTILLERY SUPPORT

The Artillery support in Vietnam was by far the best I have ever experienced. US artillery was outstanding throughout, and a high degree of professionalism was exhibited. ARVN artillery was also highly effective. Of necessity, to cover the maximum area, hamlets and the LOC's, ARVN artillery was deployed in great part by two-gun platoons. Under the circumstances these small units were highly competent. The personnel knew their job, took excellent care of their equipment, and were models of organization and cleanliness for others to follow. The ARVN Artillery School at Duc Mi should be given considerable credit for the fine job they have done in training ARVN artillerymen. ROK artillery was also excellent. Although the artillery in II Corps came from three different nations, and the personnel spoke different national languages, they had ready rapport in their artillery language. In this they were aided by the fact that all of them had been modeled upon the instruction given at the US Artillery School at Fort Sill. This fine relationship and degree of understanding greatly facilitated the development of such joint actions as combined fire direction centers, seminars and interforce schools.

The application of artillery firepower (caliber and number of rounds) was subject to numerous and often vastly different interpretations. The theory which we followed in the 4th Infantry Division, and subsequently IFFV, was to conserve ammunition during the periods of inactivity and to use it in large quantities during periods of enemy contact. This seems fairly clear and easily understandable. However, situations continue to develop wherein large amounts of ammunition are wasted in harassing or interdiction type fires. Contrarily, situations occur wherein not nearly enough artillery is fired in support of a heavy contact. In one situation I recall asking a commander how many rounds he had fired in support of a company in contact with an enemy battalion. His response was, "I put a TOT right on them". In checking, however, his interpretation of a TOT was 30 rounds; whereas, my view was that it should have been somewhere between 800 to 1000 rounds. This is a matter of judgment, and I am of the opinion we should continually stress such conditioned situations in instruction throughout our school system. Moreover, senior commanders must continually check to insure a sound judgment factor in subordinate commanders.

While I believe strongly in providing artillery support for long-range patrols, artillery, per se, should not be used as a crutch upon which they can lean. For example, if a LRP sights a lone or small group of enemy at considerable distance, artillery should not be employed. In too many

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instances, however, this has happened. I fully suspect the individual thought the first round was going to split the enemy down the middle. I have talked on this subject repeatedly, and I would be sure that it has done some good. Occasionally, however, in a one out-of-a-million shot, the first round will eliminate the enemy. This practice then becomes dogma and the whole process of indoctrination must be repeated. In a similar sense, the operating areas of LRP's should not be restricted to that within artillery fans. They have the capability to operate at considerably greater distances. Moreover, fire support in the form of gun ships and Tac Air is only minutes away. Certainly artillery should be used to support the LRP's whenever it is possible; but it should not be restrictive and must be used judiciously in consideration with all other forms of fire support. To this I would also add the use of Claymores.

Artillery coverage in II CTZ was widespread and effective. Nearly all of the LOC's, about 90% of all RF/PF units, and the vast bulk of the villages and hamlets were covered by some form of artillery fire. Moreover, forward observers had been trained, in most cases two or more of them, to adjust the fires for the supported unit. In great part this high level of support was due to the outstanding cooperation existing between the ARVN, ROK and US artillerymen, as well as their intense desire to provide the requisite protection to the people and the friendly forces. One of the best illustrations of the effective use of fire support was the RF company outpost at Kon Sum Lu, northeast of Kontum, which was attacked by an NVA battalion. The result of this operation, which was supported by an ARVN 155 Btry and a US 8-inch battery and adjusted by an RF forward observer, was that the enemy lost 152 KIA while the RF unit sustained three lightly wounded. Although this is perhaps the best example, numerous other illustrations of this sort could be cited.

ARMOR

There is a definite need for armor in counter-insurgency type operations, but it has limitations and is not the answer to all things. The tank and the APC are highly effective in securing and providing convoy protection along LOC's and in use against enemy fortified positions. However, to my view the use of a tank in the search aspect of search and destroy or search and clear operations is pure nonsense, and especially so in a jungle environment. The noise and throb of a tank provide ample warning of its presence to alert the enemy to move out of the area. Within II Corps, tanks and APC's were used extensively to provide highway security. This was accomplished through a variety of actions, including sweeping adjacent areas which had been cleared by Rome plows, providing convoy escort, and as rapid reaction forces. The Canister and Bee-hive rounds of the 90MM cannon were particularly effective in breaking up enemy attacks and ambushes. In the more open coastal areas, once the enemy had been located and pinned down in defensive positions, the tank proved most useful in dislodging him through its firepower and

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crushing effects. During the spring, summer and autumn months tanks were most useful to ROK, ARVN and US forces in the northern coastal provinces in destroying enemy positions. In the winter months, the period of the northeast monsoon, the high water and flooding restricted the use of tanks in this area to paved roadways and high ground. In the southern coastal provinces, however, the monsoon rains are sufficiently light that normally tanks can operate the year round. Here they proved most productive. For example, the provisional US tank platoon in the Phan Thiet area has added more stability to the area than any other single element. Having been successful in blasting the enemy out of their positions on numerous occasions, they have given a high degree of confidence to the ARVN, the RF/PF, and the local population. On the other hand, they are greatly feared by the enemy to the extent that he has tried on numerous occasions, but without success, to destroy or otherwise eliminate them. It should be noted, however, that for a small unit such as this (five tanks) to continue in operation, it is necessary to augment it with an inordinately large number of maintenance personnel, either from the parent unit, the LOG Command, or both. The use of tanks in the Phan Thiet area has proved so successful that plans have been developed to deploy a comparable unit to Phan Rang and possibly other coastal areas.

The M48 tank in the hands of US forces in II Corps has done a fine job, but I am of the opinion that a lighter and less expensive tank could do the job equally as well. The ARVN 3d and 8th Armored Cavalry are equipped with M41 tanks which have been used primarily for highway security. The 3d Armored Cavalry in particular has taken a heavy toll of the enemy over a prolonged period of time and with almost negligible losses of their own personnel and equipment. With the possible employment of US forces in other areas of the world, it would appear advisable to develop a lighter, more flexible and less expensive tank. Perhaps the Sheridan will fulfill that requirement.

ROK'S -- REPUBLIC OF KOREA FORCES

I had never before had the opportunity of working with ROK forces. It took a degree of learning and understanding, but I found them to be highly efficient and a distinct pleasure on my part to work with. They are most deliberate and methodical in all of their operations. At the same time, however, once a course of action is determined, they are positive, aggressive and persistent. These somewhat contradictory statements may require an explanation. They were meticulous in developing intelligence of the enemy in the proposed area of operation and in preparing their plans. Sometimes this would take weeks or months, and even then the operation may be postponed. Once the necessary picture of the enemy situation is developed, the operation is initiated with maximum strength and most aggressively. On the US side, we made every effort to support their operations through the provision of additional helicopters, artillery, tanks and APC's. This not only assisted them in the operation, but also proved of immense value in developing cooperation with adjacent US units.

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The ROK's have by far the most expertise in cordon and search operations of any of the forces I have seen in SVN. There are several key elements in their conduct of this type of operation. First, they are thorough in every detail in their planning. Secondly, their cordon involves a comparatively small area, probably not in excess of 9 to 10 square kilometers for a regimental size force. Third, the maximum force is employed, generally consisting of a regiment up to something in excess of a division. And finally, the operation is rehearsed and critiqued before it is begun. Units are moved into locations around the periphery of the cordon by a variety of means, including helicopters, trucks and by foot, but so timed that all arrive in position simultaneously to complete the encirclement. The density of the troops is such that the distance between individuals on the cordon is less than 10 meters. They leave little opportunity for the enemy to exfiltrate in small numbers. Areas, such as streams and gulleys, are barricaded with barbed wire and other barrier materials, reinforced by troops who may remain in water chest deep over night. The closing of the cordon is very slow and deliberate, not a rock is left unturned or piece of ground not probed. When the area has been cleared, they will surge back and forth through it to flush out any of the remnants. Another critical feature of their operation is the availability of reaction forces. The enemy soon knows when such a cordon is put around him. If he cannot exfiltrate by individuals or in small numbers, he may attempt to mass his forces and break out at one point. Against such contingencies the ROK's utilize several reaction forces to reinforce critical areas. They have found that the enemy may make one or even several feints at various points around the cordon prior to making the main effort to breach the encirclement. Hence, the ROK deployment of reaction forces is by small incremental elements until such time as the main effort is located, and then the action becomes rapid and positive. Through the use of these tactics, the ROK's have developed the cordon and search operation to a fine state of art. The ratio of enemy to friendly casualties has been phenomenal -- on one occasion in excess of 100 to 1. These operations are not applicable to all areas within II CTZ, nor for that matter are they effective within the entire ROK AO. They are, however, highly productive in the low, rather heavily populated coastal areas. These ROK operations have been so effective that I am of the belief that a detailed study should be made of them to be incorporated in the US Service School system.

ARVN FORCES

The ARVN forces in II Corps have matured considerably during the past year. This is so for a variety of reasons, including the leadership of General Lu Lan, the new Corps Commander, improved weaponry, the new draft laws, and the development of a great deal of confidence. The most nagging problem has been that of desertions which, it is felt, is caused to a great extent by the lack of dependent housing. A soldier, for example, in Binh Dinh who has a sick wife or child in Saigon, 300 miles away, will probably find a way or means of getting to them. If, however, his wife

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and family lived in the near vicinity of his regimental base, he would have little immediate reason to desert. To alleviate this situation a program has been developed in II Corps for the ARVN units to build dependent housing on a self-help basis, with materials being provided through associate US units.

There are two primary problems associated with ARVN. These are:

a. Leadership. The individual Vietnamese makes a fine soldier. He is a small person with limited staying power, but he has many talents, much courage, and can perform almost unbelievable feats. What he needs is leadership, perhaps more than a soldier from the US or other Western world countries. Generally, if a regiment has a good commander, it will be a good regiment; a good battalion commander, a good battalion, and so forth. Such leadership was not present in all units and is still not present in sufficient quantity. A year ago three ARVN regimental size units in II Corps were woefully weak -- all because of the lack of leadership at the regimental and battalion level. The assignment of officers down to battalion level is centralized in JGS, and the Corps Commander cannot move such commanders without their approval. It required in excess of six months on the part of General Lu Lan and myself, working through our individual channels, to replace the incompetent commanders. Once this came about, it was almost as though a miracle had taken place. These formerly inadequate units rapidly developed into some of the best ARVN combat units in all of II Corps. There is undoubtedly good reason, both politically and militarily, for JGS to have such rigid control over the assignment of its field grade and general officers. However, it would appear that a greater latitude could be given the Corps Commander. The lack of leadership is also evident in the lower ranks. This includes not only the ARVN, but in the territorial forces, the RF/PF as well. To assist in easing this problem, leadership schools were initiated in all major US units. These were expanded and later duplicated by comparable schools in the major ARVN combat forces.

b. Combat Support. Support for the ARVN combat forces is in short supply. This is especially true in the case of helicopters and engineers. A shortage of artillery still exists, but there is a firm foundation upon which to build and additional ARVN artillery units are being activated to fill the void. Headquarters, MACV and USARV are perhaps more familiar with the shortage of ARVN combat support than am I. Accordingly, I will not delve further into it, except to say that until such time as it is available within the ARVN forces the deficit or back-up must be provided from US resources.

Of the many exemplary things I have seen in SVN, the schools and training centers are perhaps the best. To my view they stand as monuments to MACV, the US advisory effort, and Vietnamese ingenuity. The several service schools of ARVN at Duc Mi, the Air Academy and the Naval Academy at Nha Trang,

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the Infantry Training Center at Lamson and the RF/PF training center at Phu Cat are outstanding. These schools and their operations should be thoroughly documented, as they represent excellent models for any other comparable school in other parts of the world.

INTELLIGENCE

The intelligence produced in 1968 was vastly superior to any that I had observed previously in SVN. This was partly because of the extensive intelligence organization which had been developed by MACV during 1967 and was exploited fully during calendar year 1968. Within II CTZ the intelligence product improved considerably. This was made possible through the effective mechanism which had been developed to coordinate the collection, processing and distribution of information and intelligence between ARVN, ROK and US forces and agencies. The intelligence staffs of the various headquarters worked well together in developing procedures, exchanging information and ideas, and conducting schools, seminars and the like to further improve the intelligence effort.

One of the problems which existed in the intelligence area was the lack of, or slowness in reporting information by the sectors and subsectors through the ARVN divisions to II Corps Headquarters for further distribution to interested US, ROK and ARVN agencies. In many instances the failure to report resulted from the fact that the importance of the information to higher headquarters was not recognized at the lower level. The primary problem was the lack of qualified ARVN intelligence officers at these levels. Qualified US intelligence advisors were also in short supply. These shortcomings are recognized by concerned ARVN and US headquarters, and continual action is being taken to correct them, but it will be a slow, gradual process.

In planning the collection of information, the one necessary ingredient for both commanders and intelligence officers at all levels is imagination. Within II CTZ we placed great reliance upon the use of large numbers of LRP's in a surveillance mode to obtain first-hand information of enemy movements and activities. Some of the methods used by ARVN and ROK's to obtain information from prisoners or Chieu hois were ingenious and, contrary to some opinions, did not involve any form of bodily harm. The individual PW or Chieu hoi, and sometimes his family, was treated most kindly and very wisely, from a psychological point of view. This included such things as clean clothes, a bath, sundry articles and meals with senior officers and, in some instances, providing a house and garden plot as well as security for the family. The information obtained through these means was extraordinary in many instances and lead them to large supply caches, enemy redoubts, the whereabouts of key VC infrastructure, and the like. This point is mentioned because the ordinary interrogator is not capable of handling such high level

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or knowledgeable individuals. Accordingly, such interrogations should be directed by highly qualified intelligence officers and, in some instances, the commander himself. The newly developed II Corps Interrogation Center should greatly improve this situation, but the attention of the senior intelligence officers and commanders must still be pointed in this direction if the maximum advantage is to be obtained.

The Phoenix Program directed against the VC infrastructure was proving highly effective. The problem, similar to that at sector and subsector levels, was the lack of qualified intelligence officers and advisors. Many of them were young and inexperienced and required extended periods of time to obtain a grasp of the situation and to organize the work.

To my view, intelligence is one of, if not the, most important aspect in countering an enemy-inspired insurgency. Without intelligence it is impossible to fix and destroy the enemy. This was true in Burma, in China, and is true in SVN today. It will also be true in any future conflict of this type. Accordingly, it would appear that we should make a maximum effort to determine the requirements for intelligence officers and noncommissioned officers, and to prepare plans now for the development of a reservoir of intelligence talent which can be utilized during the initial phases of any future conflict. This would serve as a firm base for training and further expansion. The young intelligence officers from CAS appeared better trained and more highly motivated than the junior military intelligence officers. Perhaps their recruiting and training procedures should be looked into.

PERSONNEL

The one-year tour of duty in SVN has proved highly advantageous for American and other Allied forces. It is one of the main reasons why the morale of Allied forces in SVN has remained consistently high. It provides the individual a goal to which he can look forward. The out-of-country R&R system has also added considerably to the morale and esprit de corps of US individuals and units.

The quality of US personnel in SVN has been exceedingly good, which speaks well of our service school system and replacement training centers. It is noted, however, that there has been a gradual erosion in the forces in SVN. This is manifested in the use of drugs and narcotics and some dissident elements, as well as a tendency on the part of some to avoid combat. It is felt that the Army itself can do much to correct these tendencies through improved indoctrination to create a better understanding of the roles and missions of the US and to develop motivation and a sense of dedication. In a similar sense, it is questionable whether or not some of the luxuries which have been provided in SVN can or should be continued in a future conflict, especially if it is of a large-scale nature. Here I refer to such things as two or three hot meals a day for the combat forces, ice cream to the front-line units, and the use of soda pop in lieu of water. Although these are definite morale items, they were expensive

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in terms of logistics, especially in the tactical zone where it is necessary to use helicopters to transport them to the front-line units. This problem bears considerable study. In a future conflict it will take a great deal of courage on the part of commanders to prevent such luxuries from being initiated. Once it is started, it will be almost impossible to stop without having a deleterious effect on morale. This same philosophy should pertain with respect to post exchanges, NCO and officer clubs, and the like.

ROK personnel, both officer and enlisted, are exceedingly well trained. They have adopted a three-year term of enlistment. The ROK draftee is first given basic and advanced individual training and then assigned to a unit. Personnel selection for the ROK forces in SVN is done on merit. After selection the individual is given a detailed course of instruction, oriented specifically at operations in SVN. Such training is given by a rear element of his receiving unit and is thorough and physically demanding. The individual soldier becomes attached to his new unit and highly motivated. Unit recreation programs in SVN have proved effective in maintaining morale and also furthering the physical conditioning of the soldier. Entertainment for the troops is also provided by entertainment groups from Korea. This element, combined with ROK nationalism and their desire to succeed, has developed an exceptionally fine ROK soldier in SVN. After his year in SVN the individual is returned to Korea and is expected to serve an additional year with the forces along the DMZ. The ROK system of personnel preparation and management could bear study for possible application to US and other Allied forces.

The US advisory support of ARVN combat units is expensive in manpower, especially skilled personnel. It serves a most useful purpose with new and untested ARVN units in preparing them for combat and during the initial phases of such combat. I have maintained, however, that once the unit has developed the requisite combat skills and experience, the level of the advisory effort should be reduced. This is so because many of the ARVN commanders have had extensive combat experience and, in some respects, are better qualified than the advisors. Also the American, being what he is, tends to direct and control the operations, thereby detracting from the responsibility of the ARVN commander. An experiment was tried with the 22d ARVN Division, wherein the advisory element was reduced from 169 to 69 -- a saving of 100 personnel. The remaining personnel were no longer considered as advisors but were to assist in procuring and coordinating combat support. Hence, they were known as Combat Assistance Teams (CAT). This new concept has worked well. Indications are that the ARVN commanders are more aggressive, responsible, and, as put by the division commander, reflect a high degree of confidence in the ARVN. Because of the success of the program in the 22d Division, it is currently being extended to other ARVN forces within II CTZ. I also feel that this same philosophy should be applied to the MATS or RF/PF advisors, and to province and district advisory elements.

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Within II CTZ it was quite normal for the US combat battalions to remain in the field on an almost permanent basis. The ROK's on the other hand, have developed a system within the battalions wherein semi-permanent company bases are spread throughout the length and breadth of their TAOR. Wide-spread patrols and other operations are conducted from these bases to search out small enemy forces, conduct ambush and control the country side. When a large-scale operation is planned, the required number of companies are withdrawn from the bases, in each instance leaving behind a platoon-size force to secure the base and continue operations in the surrounding area. There are numerous advantages and disadvantages of each of these systems (US and ROK) and perhaps the ultimate solution should be a combination of the two. In all events, from the point of view of the morale and physical and mental conditioning of the individual and unit operating efficiency, it appears that these two systems should be carefully analyzed and documented for lessons to be learned.

LOGISTICS

When I assumed command of the 4th Infantry Division in early 1967 the supply situation verged on the chaotic. When the division moved from Fort Lewis to Pleiku, the organic units brought with them everything they could put their hands on or put in a CONEX container. I soon found that we had almost 500 containers still banded and locked, with nobody having the faintest idea as to their contents. A sample check indicated that in many instances the contents were automotive, tank, aircraft and other forms of spare parts, as well as a variety of other line items, many of them of a high cost nature. In addition, as a result of Project PUSH, huge quantities of equipment, supplies and materials were stacked in the Support Command open storage area, with no possibility of vertical construction in sufficient time to provide protection from the oncoming monsoon. While more than ample supplies and equipment existed, they could not be used since nobody knew what was available or, if so, where it was located. A comparable situation existed in the Qui Nhon Support Command, where we had several liaison officers trying to locate critical items by searching through the huge stacks of supplies. As rapidly as possible the CONEX containers of the 4th Infantry Division were back hauled to Qui Nhon and moved subsequently to Okinawa so the contents could be put back into the supply system. We experienced a considerable loss of supplies and materiel in the open storage areas. It was impossible to work there due to the extensive monsoon mud which sometimes approached 5 to 6 feet in depth. We would have been much better off if these supplies had not been delivered. Subsequently, all units were directed to reduce their stockage to minimum operational levels so that we would not have to waste time moving supplies from area to area. This situation is mentioned because I do not think we, as a nation or as the military, can afford it in terms of costs, wastage and losses in manpower. It would appear highly desirable to have a model supply system developed to put into effect during the initial stages of another conflict of this form.

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While the supply system was not overly effective during the early part of my tour in SVN, there was an ever-increasing momentum to improve it. As of my departure from SVN in March 1969, it had progressed to the point where it was a smooth, well greased operation and totally responsive to the needs of the supported units. Each of the successive 1st LOG as well as subordinate commanders added considerably to the system during their tours of duty.

I was especially pleased with the logistical support of the 4th Infantry Division and associated units during the Battle of Dak To in November 1967. The battleground was over 100 kilometers from the Pleiku Support Command and 200 kilometers from Qui Nhon. Ammunition and POL were the two most critical items. The requirement for these items was further magnified by the loss of the majority of ammunition and explosives in the ASP as a result of an enemy artillery/mortar attack on 15-16 November. Through round-the-clock operations of the Pleiku and Qui Nhon Support Commands we were never short of the essential ammunition, POL, food and other supplies. In most instances the critical supplies were through hauled from Qui Nhon direct to Dak To to obviate additional handling in Pleiku. This effort was made possible only through the complete dedication of all of the logistics personnel concerned, and I had so informed them, both verbally and in writing.

The situation at the Ban Me Thuot East air field during the Battle of Duc Lap in July and August of 1968 was not nearly as effective. In the early part of the operation only ARVN forces were involved, but they were supported by US aviation and artillery. In addition, a reinforced US brigade was operating immediately north of Ban Me Thuot and supported from the East air field. The logistic support was provided by the Cam Ranh Support Command and they did a fine job of delivering the supplies to the air field. The primary breakdown came as a result of failure to plan sufficiently for the monsoon and the resulting mud. The Forward Supply Area (FSA) became clogged with mud and isolated, making it necessary to utilize additional storage areas adjacent to the aircraft ramp. Moreover, a failure to work out an acceptable location for the Ammunition Supply Point (ASP) between the Engineers and the LOG Command resulted in moving the ASP to five separate locations. The end result was that the ASP was isolated due to the deep mud and only a massive engineer effort, which included 5,000 yards of crushed rock from the Vietnamese civilian air field authorities, made it possible to reopen it within a month. This was a bad situation from start to finish. Eventually the IFFV Engineer was directed to stay at Ban Me Thuot East until the situation was straightened out.

The engineers have done some magnificent work in II Corps, especially so in upgrading the roads and LOC's. It appears, however, that they have become so accustomed to using heavy equipment that they have forgotten some of the field expedients, such as a long handled shovel to drain mudholes and shaping an area for drainage prior to construction.

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Essentially the young engineer should be taught that "water runs down hill" and he should also be informed of the excellent mud-making qualities of the soils in various parts of the world; e.g., that of the Vietnam Western Highlands.

We should look critically at air field construction from a point of view of cost effectiveness. Several of the air fields constructed in II CTZ were hardly utilized, but I would be sure that they were extremely costly. This included such air fields as Plei Djereng, the Oasis and Dien Khanh, as well as several lesser fields. This was not the fault of the Engineers, since the requirement to have an air field within a 40 KM radius of every point within II CTZ had been established by IFFV and higher headquarters. Some of the materials used in construction were very costly and construction often required extensive ground preparation. Even so, some of them did not hold up and required continual engineer upgrading; e.g., LZ English, constructed of PSP, was upgraded five different times and is now being replaced by an expensive concrete runway. The membrane-type air field covering was not at all satisfactory. It was easily ripped and could be torn asunder by the down-draft of a helicopter. Moreover, a small hole in the membrane often created a first-class mud puddle immediately under it. I am not an engineer, but I had considerable experience with air fields in Burma, under conditions of 200-250 inches of monsoon rains. It is my belief that we could have done better with the air fields in II CTZ by proper shaping to provide for drainage and then applying the necessary type and thickness of overcovering to support the projected traffic. Air field construction in SVN is essentially a thing of the past, but it seems advisable to conduct an in-depth study of the design, materials and equipment required for air field construction in the event we get into another conflict of this nature.

We of the Army constructed many camps and base areas in SVN. Much of our construction is of a semi-permanent nature, requiring that when we leave SVN, we will have to turn it over to ARVN or abandon it. Several of the USAF air bases within II CTZ utilized modular construction. This had been prefabricated; hence, the buildings were erected most rapidly. Moreover, it provided excellent accommodations for the airmen. I also recall seeing in WW II some Italian metal and wood prefab troop billets in Eritrea, Africa. These points are brought out with the thought in mind that perhaps we in the Army should be looking forward and planning for future construction, against the contingency of another conflict of this form in a jungle or tropical environment.

MISCELLANEOUS

During the time that I have been acquainted with the situation in SVN, I have seen many projects started and then abandoned, deserted or allowed to "wither on the vine". It would have been better had not the projects even been started. Such failures destroy the faith of the people in their government and their Army. Much time and effort may be spent trying to restart the abandoned project or to initiate a new one, but instinctively

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the people will be distrustful due to their previous experience. Basically, a project should not be started unless there is better than a reasonable chance that it will be completed.

In IFFV we initiated two actions to insure the completion of projects and programs, and to maintain their status of progress. In the first instance we synthesized each of the projects and programs into a one-page brief and consolidated them in a book known as "Command Relationships and Programs". A list of the programs included therein is attached at Inclosure 1. For individuals interested in any of the details, copies can be obtained from Headquarters, IFFV. In the latter instance, we developed a "Multi Improvement Plan" which, as the title indicates, was designed to enhance the several plans, projects and key activities. It also provided a mechanism by which they could be managed and controlled. Each such project was assigned to a proponent agency which was required to report monthly on the status of progress. Such reports were forwarded to the appropriate IFFV General Staff agency which was responsible for monitoring the particular project and providing staff supervision to the effort. Consolidated reports were provided CG, IFFV permitting him to keep abreast of the development of projects and programs. It also gave him an opportunity to provide additional guidance. A more detailed outline of the "Multi Improvement Plan" is included in Inclosure 2. To facilitate the management of the aforementioned systems, an Office of Command Analysis and Programs was initiated in Headquarters, IFFV, under the direct supervision of the Chief of Staff. The expertise of this office did much to simplify and regularize the functioning of the programs.

During my tenure as CG, IFFV, during 1968 and early 1969, I noted a considerable effort toward the development of a "One War" concept at MACV-Saigon level. In the same vein that it was extremely difficult for Headquarters, IFFV to pull together its several functions into a unified effort, it is recognized that doing such at the Saigon level is far more complicated because of the many and varied agencies involved. However, it seems to be moving in the proper direction. It is anticipated that sometime in the future there will be single control and supervision of such efforts as intelligence and operations. This will ease considerably the task of the Field Force Commander, since he will not be receiving directions from several sources and reporting to the same. It also appears advisable that certain aspects of the counterinsurgency effort outside the purview of MACV should be reviewed at that level, as well as the Washington level to further the "One War" concept. To illustrate: AID functions are divided between CORDS for the short term "pacification" type projects, while the long range developmental projects are conducted by AID without much reference or coordination with MACV or the subordinate field command. Some people take the view that these are separate and distinct functions and there is no need for coordination. I take the view, however, that they are closely related and should be carefully coordinated. Long term developmental projects have a direct bearing upon the pacification effort. They are complimentary and the two should work hand in glove. Some efforts have been initiated by IFFV/AID to at least keep each other informed. These

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points are raised, not as criticism, rather to indicate the need for a US, national "One War" concept. It is considered that the "One War" concept or a single unified effort is of sufficient importance that it should be studied at the Washington level and a typical structure developed. The study should include all of the involved agencies and the product used as a model organization in the event of a future conflict.

The Theater Army concept (Headquarters, USARV) and its relationship with the Theater (MACV), Corps (Field Forces) was developed at DA/JCS level, based upon a conventional war. Whether this is the most effective organization in a counterinsurgency environment such as existed in SVN may be subject to question. We always received excellent support and full cooperation from all of USARV's subordinate commands, such as LOG Command, aviation, MP's, medics, etc. In some instances the Field Force Commander has a strong hand in the employment of these assets; e.g., aviation, but has little to do with their command and control. In other instances, such as logistics and MP's, he is supported by them. In all instances, however, as the zone coordinator, he is responsible for their security and certain other activities relating to the US effort. I am not prepared to submit my suggestions as to how it should be organized and handled, but it appears of such magnitude and import that it should be carefully studied with a view toward developing the optimum organization against future needs.

In addition to requiring the IFFV General Staff to monitor all the activities and projects, we insisted that each of the Special Staffs direct their effort toward the total mission -- not only as it pertains to the US, but to pacification and the improvement of ARVN as well. We worked on the basis that each Special Staff section was both directly and indirectly involved in each aspect of the overall mission. For example, the chaplain. He was responsible for religious services to all US forces in II CTZ. To facilitate this, he devised a system of area control which insured that not only the major units but the small out-of-the-way outposts, signal sites, etc., were provided proper chaplain coverage. He also worked closely with ARVN to improve their chaplaincies (Buddhists, Catholic and Protestant). In the area of pacification, seminars, meetings and discussion groups were held between the various religious groups of the military and civilian population. He was also involved in restoring the churches, temples and shrines damaged or destroyed as a result of the '68 TET offensive. By March 1969 all such religious structures had been rebuilt or were in the process of reconstruction, with one exception, the large Catholic Church in Kontum which was so damaged that it will have to be razed and totally reconstructed. This same philosophy of total mission orientation applies equally as well to the other Special Staff sections.

The CORDS organization is a highly effective mechanism in developing and directing the integrated pacification and development effort. As previously stated, it is essential that the CORDS effort be coordinated fully with the overall military and security efforts. This was being accomplished within

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II CTZ. It is recognized that CORDS was developed in an evolutionary manner, but it is regrettable that it was initiated at such a late date and so much valuable time was lost in pulling together the various facets of the US pacification effort. This should serve as an excellent guide for planning the initial organization for any future conflict of this nature.

In the pacification and development within II CTZ we focused considerable attention on opening the country side through improving and upgrading of major highways, opening of the feeder roads, reopening of the railway system, and the like. This was done with a view toward providing access for the people from the country side to the towns and cities, and to permit transportation and commerce between the major population centers. Although it greatly increased the security requirements, it provided increased stability to the area and likewise assisted in developing a viable economy, transportation and communication systems. The psychological impact upon the local population was tremendous. The outstanding support and cooperation given by the US Engineers in this regard was most commendable.

The territorial forces, the RF/PF, made great progress over the past year. Undoubtedly this has been covered in many other reports; hence, the details will not be provided herein. A couple of points, however, are worthy of note. One concerns the MATS, which I feel contributed immensely toward the vast improvement of the territorial forces. MACV and USARV have taken huge strides in improving the selection, training and handling of personnel assigned to the MATS. It is noted, however, that there are still some people being assigned to the MATS who are not properly motivated or who have little or no rapport with the people with whom they are working. It would be better not to have such individuals, even if a vacancy had to occur. Perhaps they could be eliminated by even more careful selection and by a culling-out process during the training and indoctrination period. Moreover, responsible commanders at all levels should take action to separate them from the MATS in order that they not detract from this important program. The other point relating to the MATS is that the addition of these teams to the Province and District advisory elements has overtaxed the ability of headquarters at these levels to adequately administer all of their personnel. This has a great bearing upon morale and operating efficiency. Although some steps are being taken to strengthen the administration, it is considered that it must be watched carefully to insure that it is executed successfully.

Regarding relations with the Vietnamese, be they military or civilian -- integrity, honesty and sincerity are the keynotes. Never make promises which cannot be fulfilled. Try to understand his point of view, while recognizing his capabilities and limitations. Deal fairly and squarely with them and let them know you are interested in their problem and that you will do all possible to assist them. Through use of this philosophy, a high degree of rapport, understanding and friendship has developed between American personnel, commanders, and units with their

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Vietnamese counterparts within II CTZ. It should be remembered, however, that one rotten apple can spoil a barrel. Hence, an individual who is disrespectful of Vietnamese habits and customs can rapidly destroy the friendship and working relationships which have been developed. This should be stressed by commanders at all levels. In addition, improved and expanded Troop Information Programs should be focused on it.

CONCLUSION

In departing SVN I left with a high degree of appreciation and pride -- appreciation to higher and adjacent commands for their guidance, supervision and support; pride in the performance of the US forces and agencies and their contribution to the freedom of the Vietnamese people. I also left with a great deal of admiration for the ARVN, the ROK's, the GVN and the Vietnamese people. Such admiration was manifested in the improvement of ARVN and the Territorial Forces under the leadership of General Lu Lan, the II Corps staff and his subordinate commanders. Also by the tremendous fighting qualities and determination of the Republic of Korea forces; as well as the great advances made by the Government of the Republic of South Vietnam in providing political stability aimed at security and the needs of the people. The Vietnamese peasant, worker, and citizen is to be admired for his dogged determination to exist and to maintain his freedom and dignity at all costs.

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Multi-Improvement Plan

1. Situation: Prior to April 1968 there was no single management tool to guide the I FFORCEV management efforts in the many areas of command interest. The Commanding General had no systematic way to provide direction, measure progress or insure continuity of programs that had been started in II CTZ. Objectives were not clearly defined and the updating process was varied and time consuming. As a result, many worthwhile projects failed to receive the proper interest and many times withered away from neglect. Clearly, a workable and responsive management tool was needed, one that focused on the program objectives and provided the necessary guidance to these programs.

2. Solution:

a. The Commanding General on 24 April 1968 directed that a multi-improvement plan be developed for I FFORCEV. This plan was to identify those significant improvement projects, called programs, which were to be accomplished in furtherance of the I FFORCEV military, civil, and advisory mission. The multi-improvement plan would permit the Commanding General to guide these programs, allow him to monitor their progress and insure their continuity, and would keep all interested staff agencies informed on program progress for coordination or information purposes.

b. In May 1968 the I FFORCEV Multi-Improvement Plan became operational. Significant projects were identified and became the programs of the Multi-Improvement Plan. Each program is broken down into specific goals towards which the program is directed. Included in each goal are tasks which have to be accomplished before that particular goal is reached. Each included task has a set of required actions that are necessary to that included task's completion. When all goals are reached, the program is complete and is normally dropped from the Multi-Improvement Plan unless retained for monitoring purposes. The individual having primary responsibility for a program is called the proponent. He insures that program guidance issued by the Commanding General is incorporated into the program. The ACofS G1, G2, G3, G4 and DEPCORDS are designated as the proponents for all programs in the Multi-Improvement Plan. The individual who is responsible for program development and execution, supervision of the program activities, and status reporting is called the program manager. The Special Assistant for Command Analysis and Programs is tasked with monitoring the overall Multi-Improvement Plan and identifying significant items of interest to the Commanding General. The Multi-Improvement Plan is up-dated monthly for the Commanding General's review and comments.

3. Results: The Multi-Improvement Plan has given the Commanding General a workable and responsive tool to manage the many diverse and often complex improvement programs undertaken in II CTZ. It enables him and his staff to focus attention on the entire scope of these improvement projects and to insure there is proper guidance and continuity.

4. Expectations: It is expected that the Multi-Improvement Plan will enable the Commanding General and his staff to continue monitoring and directing improvement efforts in II CTZ.

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| | 3 | Office of Command Analysis and Program |
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Unclassified

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